SPORADIC NOT PERIODICAL

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CARICATURES BY H.H.

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QUACK

THE position of a wild ass is peculiar; he is certainly not such an ass as his domesticated brother, which at the same time an ass he is, and probably knows it; he can no more be made responsible than an escaped lunatic. It would be reasonable to enquire what the Creator meant when sanctioning the evolution of this species. Perhaps merely a depôt from which the tame kind are to be drawn. If so, was it worth it? The little good an ordinary ass does is offset by the pain generated by looking at him. His helplessness, his clumsiness, his ugliness, all are sources of infinite sympathy.

* * *

Beg, borrow or get it. Some, beg, we all borrow, others get it. There are many ways of getting it, and I was much struck with a new method which came to my notice the other Saturday at Kiangwan, where we all paid $2 to catch a cold. The numbers of my tickets were 1214, 1215 and 1216 respectively, and even supposing we were the last $2 × 1216 = $2432.00. So, if the ticket numbers are anything to go by, this seems to be quite a good way of getting it, doesn't it? Next Saturday, between the hours of 2.30 and 5 p.m., I will pledge myself to be sitting in a first-class railway-carriage at the Shanghai Nanking Railway Station, and those desirous of witnessing this display may do so on payment of $1 only. You will find it much warmer than Kiangwan, infintely more amusing and much cheaper. On Saturday morning a Blue Flag on the Palace Hotel will indicate that I am sitting, and a Red Flag that there will be No Egg.

* * *

Railway officials will receive complimentary tickets.

If we have to pay more for our ice
Next summer-time, won't that be nice?
We'll drink tepid sherbet,
I promise you, Herbert,
If four cents a pound is your price!

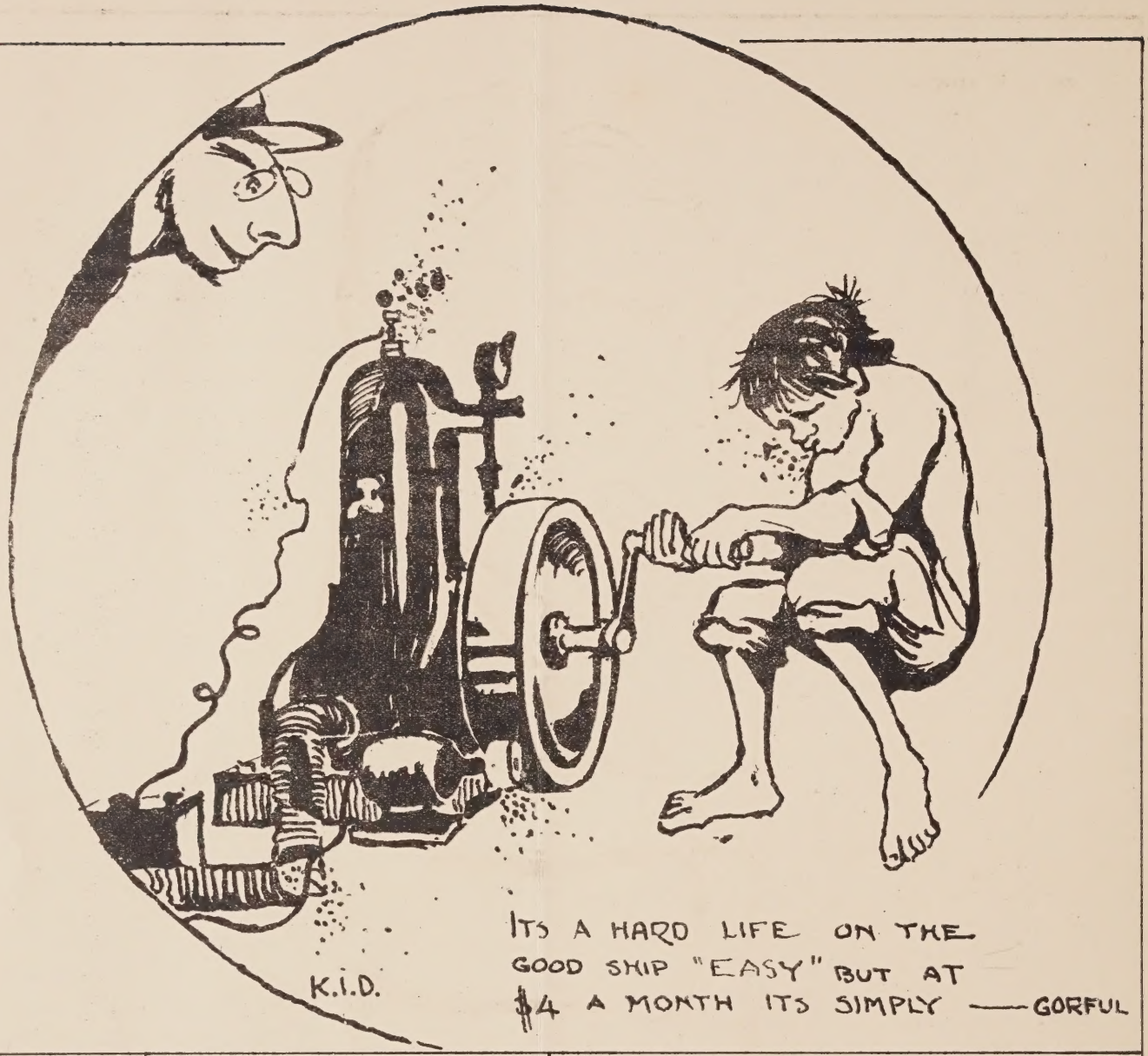
* * *

As a shareholder (one share) I protest, I do really, for I use so much of it that in summer the bill far exceeds my winter coal bill. Of course we all know that you could not pay any large dividend before, but being such an extensive shareholder that did not matter to me particularly. I really did hope to see a better fight put up by the bigger bird before this philanthropical scheme went through.

* * *

I suppose it was the new harp that put the idea into my head. I was admiring it last Sunday at the Town Hall in all the glory of it's gilt thingummies, when it struck me that it made the poor old platform look horribly shabby. Little bits of varnish and paint and stuff are peeling off all over the place that I had not noticed before. It brought all the ratepayer's instinct in my soul to the surface. Hopgood was sitting with me, and we both agreed that we ought to have a new platform to match the harp. We talked it over afterwards, and evolved quite a jolly one before we got to the Club. It ought to be semi-circular, with raised tiers for the performers, who would thus be able to see and to be seen. And it is quite important that they should be seen, too; Mrs McCormick tells me that she only thoroughly appreciates the Sunday Concerts when she has an uninterrupted view of the gentleman who plays the—but, I forgot, it's a secret. Anyway, she said that the Wagner afternoon was quite spoilt for her, on account of only being able to see his boots.

The tier business would be undoubtedly better for sound, you know, and think how delightful it would be for Mamma and Aunt Kate at the big balls. Put them in rows of armchairs up there, and they would have a lovely view, instead of being scrumped up, as usual, on the level, where



they can see nothing unless they happen to be in the front row. All the fun of the fair, Ladies! Oh, they wouldn't want to go home *half* so soon!

An advertising scientist tells us that if we kept a Formamint tablet permanently in our mouths we should never catch any diseases. No microbe would have a chance. I wonder if it would have kept the Fancy Dress microbe at bay if all had tried it. There was a threatened epidemic last month, if you remember, only very narrowly averted. And now the air is positively humming with these pestilent little germs again. Everything points to a serious crisis about the middle of February, spending itself in delirium about the date of the German Ball. Everybody's doing it! Ordinarily sane and hard-headed men of business are tremulous with indecision. Hopgood has dark leanings towards a masked *Apache*, but it is a dead secret, and I ought not to have told you. Merridew asked me this morning if I didn't think *Henry VIII* was rather his style, but I advised him to take a table-napkin and disguise himself as a Head Waiter. Somebody late in the evening might tip him from force of habit, and no chance is worth sniffing at in these hard times.

. . . . . .

I know it is horribly tempting, St Valentine's day and all that, but, Oh my masters, let no one give way to the wild idea. We don't want Cupid in the flesh.

. . . . . .

I caught myself this afternoon brooding on side-whiskers and a brocaded waistcoat. I believe I've got the fever too. Hi! Where's my Formamint?

MR. A. P. STOKES.

BILLIARDS

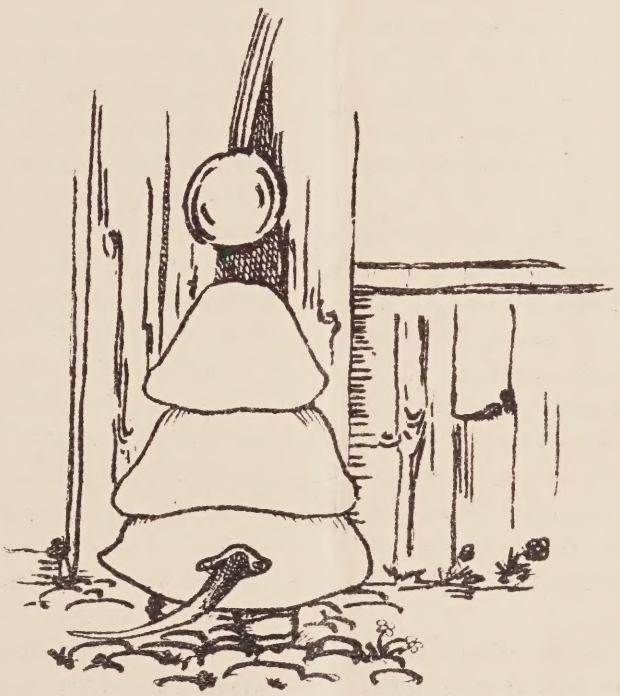
UN-NATURAL HISTORY FOR SIMPLETONS

NO. 1. THE SWUMP

The oddest creatures are the Swumps,
They mostly live in leaky pumps;
Their hides are of a greeny-white,
And absolutely water-tight.
They sometimes venture round the yard,
But only when it 's raining hard.

This curious taste takes years to get;
When young they can't abide the wet;

Their Ma's don't seem to understand,
And train them with a Spartan hand.
Here in the picture you may see
A Swumplet at the age of three.



You'd say he didn't mind a bit:
(He's really simply *hating* it.)
Instructed not to mind the cold,
He always does what he is told.

Ah! What a pity some of us
Are not more like this little cuss.

THE FABLE OF THE WOMAN WHO DID NOT KNOW WHEN SHE WAS WELL OFF

Now in the City of Zaunghae, where many strange things have happened, there dwelt a man and his wife. And the God of Things that Are had been good to the man, and had rewarded him according to his merits. For he was a shrewd merchant, and industrious withal, and every day laboured to the limit of his endurance in the busy mart. So that in time he waxed fat and well-liking and built himself a fine house not an hundred miles from the Well that is called Bubbling.

And though his soul melted in pleasure in such things as sweet oils and fine linen, and his heart was rejoiced exceedingly over a piece of venison or fresh lobsters from Dal Né, there was no thing that he loved so much as he loved his wife, for she was the apple of his eye. And she was indeed comely to look upon, for her hair was of pure gold, and her eyes as the blue of the wing of the kingfisher. And his pleasure was to deck her with pearls and with costly garments which disturbed the night's rest of the less fortunate women of Zaunghae. Moreover, she was as virtuous as she was beautiful, and kept his fine house with wisdom and discretion beyond her years. So that to see her was happiness, and the merchant basked in the sunshine of his home.

And behold he fell into a most unwise custom of saying unto her "Heart of my heart, there is no other like thee in all the world!" And she answered at first humbly, and trembled in her heart that she had pleased her lord. But after he had declared this foolish saying unto her an hundred times, she came to believe it as the truth, and was wroth within herself when the merchant slept after his nightly feast, being heavy with wine, and weary with the day's work. And her spirit cried "I am indeed fairer than other women, and more desirable than rubies, even as he has told me. But of what use is this marvel if there be none to see and to spread abroad the wonder?" And in this manner she became restless, and could no longer labour peacefully at fine needle-work, but brooded without ceasing upon the top of her husband's head, which was unpleasing in shape, and hairless as the egg of a pelican. Neither was his countenance comely when he slept unreservedly, though at other times he was as other men are. And upon this also she brooded, and lost sight of his estimable virtues in a cloud of resentment.

And it came to pass at that time that a rich man of that city give a large feast where there was singing and dancing and much merry-making. And the merchant and his wife were bidden to the feast, and arrayed themselves in their finest robes and jewels to do honour to themselves and the rich man. And behold, there was in that assembly a young man, a stranger newly come to that city, and his hair was as black as the wing of a raven, and he had the eye and the strength of an eagle. And he was further gifted with much skill as a dancer, so that to look upon him was a delight. And when his gaze fell upon the wife of the merchant, he said unto himself, "This is indeed my province," for she glowed like unto one of her own lustrous pearls, and was bathed in a most seductive perfume. Furthermore, the young man was of a roving disposition.

And after a time the merchant sought his wife and said unto her, "Come, for it is late, and I am weary." But she sat drinking wine from a golden cup in company with the young man and would not hearken. So he came a second time with no better result, and again the third time, when he was exceeding angry, and rent his clothes. So that his wife went with him in the latter end, but hardened her heart against his reproaches, for she thought of naught but of the stranger, and of his honeyed words.

And the next day the stranger came unto her house while the merchant was yet in the city, and beguiled her with many fair words, so that she could not sleep for the thought of him. And lo! he had more skill to lay his tongue to fair speech than her husband, so that her heart became as wax towards him. And she neglected the duties of her household, and let weeds grow in the garden, while she meditated upon his eyelashes, and upon the manner in which the hair grew upon the back of his neck. And when her husband wept because she no longer tended his garments, nor warmed sandals for the comfort of the soles of his feet, as in the old time. she made a mock of him, and said "In sooth, thou art a dull fellow!"

And in the latter end the heart of the merchant became as stone towards her, and he cried out at her,

"Begone, worthless one, for I have no more pleasure in thee, since thou hast none in me!" And the woman laughed, half-closing her eyes, and said, "I will go to one who will truly love me, and he will load me with better jewels and costlier raiment than thou hast ever dreamed of, for he is a Man, and thou art but a poor clod."

And with that she left him, recking not one whit of his former kindness.

And she came to the house of him of the raven locks, and knocked upon the door, crying "Open to me, for I have come to thee at last, and am rid of my witless husband; now am I come to be the Ornament of thy house and the Light of thine eye, as thou hast told me many times." But he looked out of an upper window and cried "Begone, shameless one, I was but passing the time in this benighted country, and thy foolish vanity hath magnified my pleasantries. Moreover, I am betrothed to a daughter of mine own people, who is fairer than thou as the sun to the moon." And he shut the window, and took up a parchment that he had been reading.

And the woman saw that she had been even as a Juggins, and for very shame dared not go back to her own husband to beg mercy from him. So that she fled in a vessel to a far country, and was seen no more in that city.

Moral—You Never can Tell.

NOVEMBER

When the aspen stands forlorn,
Sighs and trembles in her leaves,
And the lean-limbed alder grieves
That the summer days have gone;

When the maple dons her gown,
Mottled crimson mixed with gold;
And the sad year growing old,
Sees his hour-glass run down;

Then the Wind Elves scurry by,
All a-chatter with gay laughter,
And the Storm Fiend follows after,
Roars and bellows through the Sky.

Close at heel comes weeping Rain,
Till with thunder-cloud for steed,
Rides up Night with reckless speed,
Takes possession once again.

MR. M. G. BECK

LINES INSPIRED BY "THE COLD SHOULDER"

(See last *Quack*.)

So pretty,
P'raps witty,
Not a prude?
Not too good?
Like to kiss her—love making me bolder!
Were she kind,
She'd not mind;
If she frowned,
I'd change round,
And attack her about the cold shoulder!

OUR MUNICIPAL

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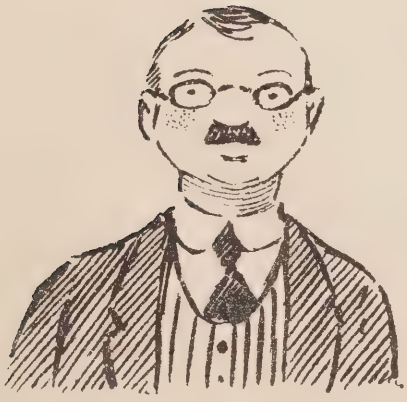

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(O'Brienite.)

MR. H. C. GULLAND
(Conservative.)

QUACK.—SHANGHA

LOAN PR

Old Mrs. Sextuple to Young Master China.—"Money's very tight, my dear John, bu

ere's twenty-five pounds to go on with and you'll have to do the best you can on that."

SMITH'S SPEECH

I was sitting in the verandah of the Hongkong Club one Sunday morning many years ago. You know how one feels sometimes on Sunday morning?—Well, I was feeling just like that, paying heavy toll for Saturday night, and badly in the blues. I was living at the Club then, and was the sole occupant of the verandah, which fact in itself was not exactly cheerful. Why was I here a wretched, lonely bachelor? Why had she preferred the other chap to me? Why had I placed such unbounded trust in Charbonayes? Why had I believed so implicitly in a land called Borneo? Thank Heaven there were no gloomy rubber reveries in those days to add to my misery; rubber was not on tap then, not even on the *tapis*. But all that is another story, and the one I want to tell you is about Smith.

I was just meditating a stroll in the direction of the Cathedral, and wondering what the odds were on the chance our latest arrival turning up there—a charming young widow who was doing considerable damage among the susceptible male portion of the colony—when young Tommy Brent bounded up the Club steps. "Hullo, Neville," he cried, "heard the news?"

"News?" I responded dully, pulling myself together, "No, I haven't; what is it?"

"Smith's going home!"

"What! For good?"

"Good and all, lucky beggar."

Smith was probably the most popular man in the colony. Everybody loved him. A splendid all-round man, good at work, good at play, and now he had made his pile, and was going home while he was still young enough to enjoy it. No doubt Smith was a man to be envied, except in one particular. He stammered. Great Scott! How that man stammered! Talking to him quietly wasn't so bad, but get him nervous or excited, and the effect was disastrous. It was really quite painful to be within earshot. As Tommy and I sat discussing Smith's luck—and a cocktail, other men came in and joined us, and we decided that Smith must be given a farewell dinner. But we also decided that there must be no speeches. Imagine our poor guest, hating to be helped, as all stammerers do, in the agony of returning thanks, his thoughts crowding thick and fast upon him, and his unruly tongue refusing to give them utterance!

A date was fixed, and as the time drew near, the list of those wishing to do honour to our old friend grew to such proportions that it was found necessary to engage one of the banqueting rooms in the City Hall for the occasion.

The night arrived. We were all in good form, and everything promised a most festive evening. All went merrily as the proverbial wedding bell until, alas, the wine and the general hilarity proved too much for one of the younger men. He rose rather unsteadily to his feet, and in a very eulogistic speech, proposed the health of the guest of the evening. He resumed his seat amid an uncomfortable silence. We all felt that tragedy was in the air! Something must be done, and that quickly. Without stopping to think, the man on Smith's right, a worthy but rather tactless sort of fellow, rose and in a few well-turned phrases returned thanks on behalf of our guest.

One could have heard a pin drop when *he* sat down.

As Smith got on his legs, very white and determined, we seized our glasses, as one man, in a desperate grip. Petrified, we watched him, waiting, and then it came!

"Mr. Chairman and g-g-g-gentlemen, B-B-Balaam c-c-c-couldn't speak, s-s-so his ass s-s-spoke for him!"

Then he calmly sat down.

The residents near the City Hall that night were awakened out of their beauty sleep by the roar of applause that greeted Smith's ready wit.

LINES ON THE DEPARTURE OF AH CHOU

Alone upon my housetop in the North,
A miserable wretch, alas am I!
I sent thee from me in my hasty wrath,
Come back to me, beloved, or I die;

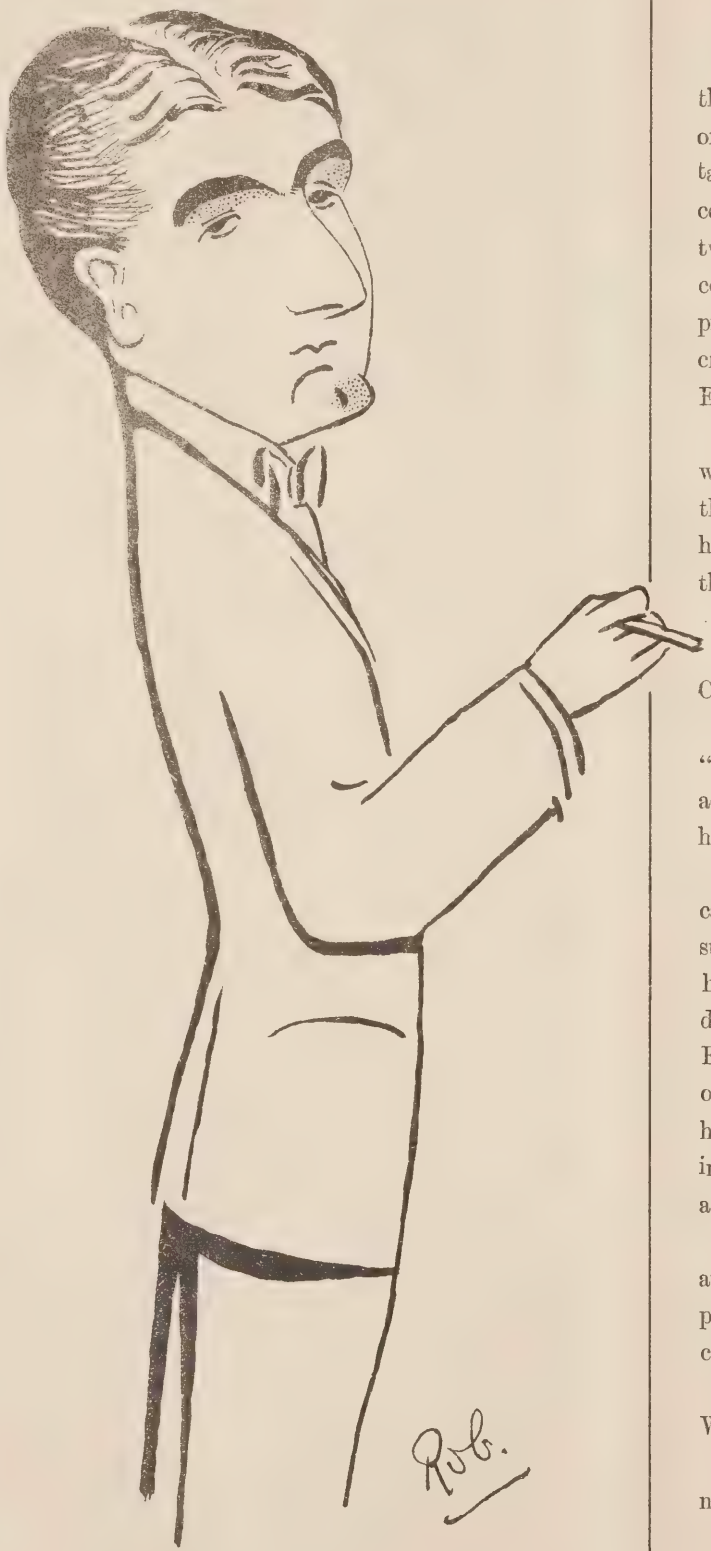
Thy substitute is old and gone in years,
His squeeze on all the house bills leaves me dry;
A smasher, palsied with his guilty fears;
Come back to me, beloved, or I die!

My boots would bring disgrace to any feet,
My trousers crease is wretchedly awry;
No comfort have I known since thy retreat,
Come back to me, beloved, or I die!

JAN. 25
—1759—

"BURNS' NICHT"

MR. C. M. G. BURNIE.



UNION INSURANCE

THE EARTHEN BOWL

If for six hours of a Summer's day you are wading through those mildewed quagmires of human thought, of which much of the Chinese classical lore consists, take your teacher outside into the open air with the coolie bearing a long rattan chair, and with a book or two not too weighty to carry: it will revive a failing courage: take the commentary of a French Padre, for preference: it will seem less heavy in the end than the crabbed half-educated lucubrations of the well-known English translator.

Thus it was that Old Kao and young Mr. Wilder were on the City Wall, under the branches of one of the rare trees which a population, hungry for firewood, has for some reason permitted to grow to old age by the side of the East Gate at Maoshanhsien.

. . . . . .

Kao said "We were speaking of the historiographer Chou."

"Which is not so good," replied young Mr. Wilder, "as going to the new Theatre and seeing the comic actors who cause a man to laugh. And as to the historiographer Chou; a malison upon his mother!"

The hanging ends of old Kao's moustache combed carefully to droop in decorous parallels, twitched in a strictly confidential and half-hidden smile. This was his apology to the shades of the Sages: the sign of deprecation with which he spoke to his friends of the Foreigner's attempts to understand the pithy and oracular futilities of the Great Learning. He removed his large horn spectacles in token of his pupil's intention to spend the rest of the afternoon in chatter, and answered:—

"But did you not say that the hot wash-face towels at the Theatre communicate eye-sickness? besides the play is the Earthen Bowl which you will not comprehend, unless beforehand you know the story."

"Tell it out, and we stay here," said young Mr. Wilder leaning back in his long chair.

"But it is a devil-story," he replied, "and did you not say the Foreigners do not believe in devils?"

"Yes, but that was speaking of the steal-child-devil which, according to your saying, occasioned the

gardener's little boy to die; whereas there is no one in the World that does not know that it was from eating unclean melon. I believe in all devils. Tell the story."

So this is the story of the Earthenware Bowl as Kao told it:—

In Hsü Chou Fu on the Southern border of Shantung there is a place called Old Thief Village. How it has the name, who knows? But all the men have wicked bowels, and the women black cores in their hearts. Outside the village there lived a man named Fat-head-Ming, with a wild-talking wife. They kept a small inn for occasional travellers, and they had also a pottery-kiln, where they made earthen-pots and small kongs, and quarrelled with every customer about the price.

When men are fat they are generous. But with Fat-head it was not thus. His body was as thick as his face; but his skin was thickest of all, for he suffered never from shame: even cheating little farmers over the price of a soak-vegetable dish. Hard and crafty he was in disposition, but he smiled always with inviting looks. His wife, while of the same disposition, showed it on the contrary in her face, and railed ever with rasping voice, at him, and at Heaven, and at her Fate, which decreed for her the life of a thing of no happiness, but only of work, and not enough rice.

'In addition to which,' she said to him, screaming out from where she sat cutting firewood with an unwieldly chopper one bad evening in Winter, 'there is no pea-nut oil for the little vegetables; no bowls have been sold for a month; there are no travellers in the World; the chopper is not sharp, and you are fat always—'

—'and you cease prating never,' he concluded. 'Continue to cut wood with the chopper which is not sharp. It can do that at least, and so can you.'

"But supposing I had something softer to cut," she rejoined with an angry, sidelong look, "I would then call it sharp."

At this moment there was a violent barking outside, by the wild pariahs which stray about the house at night. It was a guest with three mules and a servant:

NORTH CHINA INSURANCE

a young man, on his way to the Doctor's examination at Peking, he said; and he would stay in Peking a while first for further study. Fatty knew then that he would be well provided with silver for his journey's end. He had with him one servant, strong in body but stone deaf. The mules were stabled in an outhouse, and the guest and his servant went early to sleep.

. . . . .

Fatty and his wife sat over a flickering oil-lamp and looked at one another. For one time in her life she was silent; but she stared at him out of her bold hard eyes, and her brows bristled.

He said: 'You, the servant: I, the master.'

'He is the bigger,' she said with a cold laugh.

'Yes,' he answered smoothly, 'but he hears nothing.'

She rose and swaying gingerly across the room on her little feet pointed to the chopper which she had been using. Then they went to bed.

. . . . . .

In the morning dusk she went out first, taking her chopper with her. The servant followed to procure the master's tea-pot, and other requisites from the baggage as she well knew he would. So she tied a string low down across the outer doorway, and standing outside the inner door as he came, closed it behind him, and followed him sideways across the little flagged courtyard all unheard. But before he came to the string the inward knowledge which warns the deaf even as it guides the blind, caused him to turn, and then without seeing her,—for she was at the side,—he spied that the inner door was shut. So he half turned in surprise during the time of an eye-wink, and receiving the chopper on the side of his head, fell over in a heap.

When Fat-head came out she was hacking steadily.

'The chopper is not sharp,' she cried.

'Oh mud-headed woman' he answered 'likewise the master is not deaf, but only the servant, and he is dead, so no use to stay there making an evil mess of sixes and sevens: this is not firewood but flesh.'

So they cleared it all away quickly, leaving the little courtyard as before, while the master slept for one hour after sunrise; for he was tired and young in age.

(*To be continued.*)

SNAG LAKE

(GRAHAM ISLAND B.C.)

Wrapped in a shroud-like mist,
By the sweet sun unkissed,
  Silent you lie.
While a gull's eerie scream,
As in some evil dream,
  Pierces the sky.

Do ripples never fret
Your lonely surface set
  In resigned calm?
Night follows day, and then
Covers you o'er again
  With his dark arm.

And when the dawn appears,
Grey, and with unshed tears
  Speechless you stay.
Whence came yon leering hosts
Of pale and breathless ghosts
  In grim array?

Twisted and limbless snags
Like vile and uncouth hags;
  Once they were trees.
Waiting time's ruthless hand,
Now in the flood they stand
  Up to their knees.

Ghostly a loon flits by
And his hysteric cry
  Adds to the spell.
Since when that lepered lake?
And when will Death o'ertake?
  Time but can tell.

AN ELECTION ECHO

Why vote for L . ws . n and Lower Rates, when you can vote for Tuppence, and keep on owin'?

CLUB REGULATIONS

(with apologies to "Punch")

Female Voice (on telephone). "THAT BELONG HALL PORTER? WELL, MY WANTCHEE SAVVY S'POSE MY HUSBAND HAVE GOT, NO GOT?

Hall Porter. "NO MISSISSY, HUSBAND NO GOT.

Female Voice. "HOW FASHION YOU SAVVY NO GOT, S'POSE MY NO TALKEE NAME?

Hall Porter. MASKEE NAME, MISSISSY, *any* HUSBAND NO GOT THIS SIDE *any* TIME.

AU GROS NAPOLITAIN

I suppose it was the weather that made me feel so cheery. Usually I am at my worst at the hour of getting up; I feel cheap and am nasty. But on this particular day I had hardly thrown aside the bedclothes ere I was singing blithely. Outside the sunlight was pouring down but the grass and the trees were still white with hoar frost. So many diamonds sparkling in the golden light.

My good temper continued. Even the advent of a dubious egg at breakfast failed to shake its serenity. A sarcastic reference to the Ming Dynasty in connection with the selfsame egg was utterly lost on the attendant menial but even this did not damp my spirits. On the contrary, they rose.

Following my usual custom, I took the tram into town. The gloom of my fellow passengers, always profound in a tram car, but profounder at that hour of the morning, did not affect me in the slightest. It was all I could do to refrain from carolling my bath song.

I always get off the tram at the corner of the Szechuen and Nanking Roads. At the Kiangse Road corner, I was bubbling over good humour. Life was a boon, a gift of the gods. And yet I got off the car a miserable wretch. Life was sordid and certainly not worth living.

Whence this remarkably sudden change? There must have been some reason for it.

There was! It is about it that I am writing.

There is a shop in the Nanking Road on the right hand side going towards the Bund and not far from the Kiangse Road. Above the shining plate glass of its windows is inscribed the golden legend "Au Gros Napolitain."

And behind the plate glass! *Oh, la, la!*

(French is the only language which can adequately describe it).

Prosaic people would call "Au Gros Napolitain" a a ladies' outfitter. One glance at its windows and you will cry shame on them. Exquisite things; marvellous confections of fine linen, lace and ribbon; filmy things looking less like garments than the foam on a glass of champagne. Things a bachelor would wot nothing of were it not for "Au Gros Napolitain."

At least, he oughtn't to wot anything.

But this does not account for my depression, you will say.

Patience!

Not least among the marvels displayed is a leg. Truly the most wonderful, shapely limb in all the world. Every day it is arrayed in silken hose for all the world to see, every day hose of a different shade. Now yellow, now pink, now blue and always with the daintiest of garters to match. The glimpse I catch of it daily as the tram speeds by is the moment of the day. Anticipation quickens my pulse as we approach, memories of that glimpse make my daily toil and tribulation seem rose-coloured.

It was not there.

That was the tragedy. That was why I got out at the Szechuen Road a broken man.

I wonder if the Shanghai public will plead with me for its reinstatement or if it will think that I am merely pulling the "Gros Napolitain's" leg.

It is my fault for writing *au grand sérieux* for a comic paper: I take the risk of being misunderstood. I ought, of course, to have sent this in to the *North China Daily News*.

Shanghai Mercury, January 20, 1913.

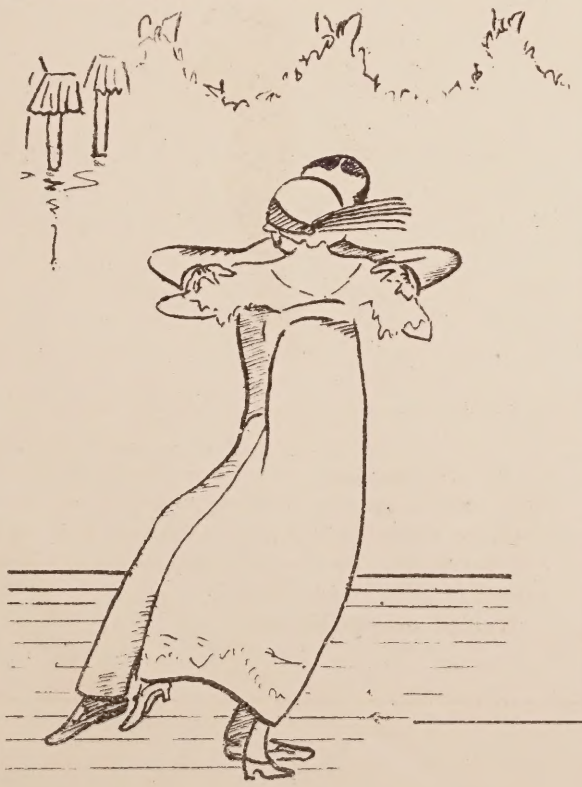
"We have been asked to state, by two members of the "Casual Ward, that the inmate referred to in our issue of "Saturday returned to the ward at 6.55 p.m. on Thursday and "not at 8.30 p.m. The rules, of course, require that inmates "should be in the ward by 6 p.m."

Ruffled susceptibilities!

EVERYBODY'S DOING IT

Mrs. McPherson and I had thoroughly agreed on the question of the one-step. I don't mind telling you in confidence that she is a very charming person, and, as a matter of fact, we always do agree about everything. Moreover, she is the wife of my taipan, so that anyway I should have to agree with her, even if I didn't feel like it. But about this one-step business, both of us really meant what we said. They were playing a rag-time as an encore, and we both stopped dancing, and looked on. I remember Mrs McPherson getting quite pink with indignation. "It would never be ALLOWED at the Country Club" she said. "it's either a stupid walk, Or—oh goodness, just *look* at those two! It's SIMPLY DISGRACEFUL, it OUGHT to be STOPPED. I never saw anything so AWFUL, did you?" We talked about it all through supper, and I remember Mrs McPherson saying that it was a SIGN of the TIMES.

Soon after, I had to go up to Tientsin on business, and managed to put in a pretty good time. There was a girl there who turned out to be a perfect dear. Her name was Edith, and she had rather a nice turn-up nose, and danced like a bit of thistledown. Before I knew where I was she had me doing the "grizzly"; simply took me in hand as if I'd been a wheelbarrow, and before the end of the evening I was smitten with the fever.



That's what it is—fever.

Dawn saw me prancing up and down my room at the hotel, and I shaved to the tune of "Dixie," cutting my chin rather badly in two or three places. Edith's people had a gramophone, and we used to dance to that when we had nothing better, and I became a perfect devil at it. The thought of Mrs McPherson was positively the only fly in the ointment.

I had to leave rather suddenly on a cable from McPherson. I felt rather rotten about it, and Edith cried a good deal, but that is another story.

I arrived late on a Saturday, dined at the Club, and went along to the Astor House to see if I could pick up something that could one-step. The room was fairly empty, and I spotted a little woman in pink at the other end, turkey-trotting like an angel. Her whole soul was in it, and anyone could see that she had the rag-fever with a pretty high temperature. I put up my glass to have a look.

It was Mrs McPherson, bless her!

"TOAST"

When on the table was deposited,
The breakfast-tray, a disapproving glance
Fell on the toast rack. "Jane," her master said,
"Methinks this food hath met with some mischance,
Proceed forthwith and from her realm unseen
Summon Acrasia*," (by this cryptic name
It was his wont to call their kitchen's queen)—
"I would have speech with her!"—Anon she came,
Filling the doorway, whom, indifferent
To shrugs behind the tea urn, he addressed—
"Explain, Acrasia, why this aliment,—
Man's least sophisticated diet and his best,—
Is thus incinerate. The heretic
Of olden days was better treated, whose poor bones
Were never set on rack after the lick
Of flame had charred them. Excellent thy scones,—
Thy cakes and patties rise, thy jellies set,
With fish or game, with meat,—or fried or roast,—
I know thy skill the appetite to whet;
Then why unequal to a slice of toast?

Now will I treat thee to a dissertation
Of priceless value. Not too new should be,
Nor stale, the subject for decortication.—
With knife, from odious taint of onion free,—
Cut not o'er thickly, yet enough of crumb
To leave a soft interior, when the round
Before the fire has nicely crisp become.—
Essential is it that the coals be found
Glowing and clear, and to attain this end
And render them white—not to scorch the bread,
Early uprising I would recommend;—
No slice is turned the while you turn in bed!

Knowst thou the beauty of a sole well fried?
So be each segment, tinted red and yellow,
As ear of corn at golden harvestide,
Or rind of apple when the fruit is mellow,—
For toast at *tea* a caution I would add
When'er you see your Master in the dumps,
Serve it up *buttered*,—but he would be glad
If you would spread it thinly, not in lumps!

I toasted once thy mistress! Do not start!
Long years ago with brimming glass in hand,
And foot on table; she had won my heart,
And her I pledged as fairest in the land.—
But now, when I've been ill, and for champagne
Or honest wine I have with tears besought her,
She shakes her head, and orders up again,—
In my despite,—that hateful toast and water!"

Cook left the room and thinking how discreetly
He had conveyed his gentle hints that morning,
He heard not far away a voice say sweetly
"As sure as toast is toast, my dear, that cook will give me warning."

* The intemperate one. *The Fuëry Queene*, Book II, Canto 12.

AFTER THE FRAY

* * *

THE OPIUM LIBEL ACTION—N. C. D. N. Leader, January 16, 1913. Yes, yes, we quite agree with you, but why, "Publican" Oh! was *this* "checked?"

* * *

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

*** *N.B.—We shall be glad to receive letters from any correspondent, bogus or otherwise, and to give advice on any subject whatever, from affairs of state to the most delicate, or indelicate, affairs of the heart.*

BOARDER: Try the dog with it.
LYCEUM: Yes, be sure you are letter-perfect in your words.
BOY: What side that thing Mother have catch auction?
AREONAUT: The name of the anthem is "Oh, for the wings of a dove!"
DUNLOP: They are made of pink flannel. And we'll lend you the office top-hat.
SILLY-SEASON: At home it is in the Spring—out here the Spring is always with us.
MISLETOE: We think you bought it alright. You are old enough to know better anyway.
DAVID: We wish you would do your famous circus act again. We should like so much to see it.
NEW CHINA: That's a pretty healthy rate, isn't it? We hope in those Clubs that it is *Strict* Propriety.
PLAYGOER: We think your clique should have shown up in force, especially as it was a Friday. He has our sympathy.
KALEE. We don't usually publish puns but water lot of damage you would have sustained if it hadn't been for the water.
NEW YEAR'S EVE: There were eight inside, three in front, one on the bonnet, and two on the roof. (Oh Theodore!)
SPEELIE: No, we know of no rule that could prevent you from singing in your bath so long as you don't take it at 2 g.m.
RACE CLUB: The biggest chit was for 75 cocktails. We cannot publish names, so your guess at the biggest consumer must remain unanswered.
CHIC: Our Fashion Editress suggests that you soak the complete garment in melted candle-grease, and you will find that the original grease-spot will entirely disappear.

QUACK

Some Press Opinions :—

Welcome to dispel lassitude. We shall read thrice tremblingly. Modern fiction well represented. Illustrations admirable. Altogether pleasing.—
North China Daily News.

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